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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; US POLICY ON IRAN; IRAQ; THE KIRCHNERS TO
THE US; 09/17/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend international stories are related to the US policy on the Iranian threat; the Bush administration's alleged attempt to "shift the blame to its successors for the cost of its failed military operation in Iraq;" and President Nstor Kirchner and First Lady/Senator and presidential candidate Cristina Kirchner's trip to the US.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "The White House debate on Iran is revived"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacisn," writes (09/17) "The White House's internal debate has been revived on what to do with the 'Iranian threat' before President George W. Bush leaves office in January 2009.

"There are two main courses of action - deepen the diplomatic option or attempt the armed option through selective bombings on alleged nuclear facilities.

"US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice leads a group that promotes continued direct talks with the Ahmadinejad administration, which is supported by the US Pentagon, with its operative capability exhausted after years of waging two simultaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the tough line is again promoted by VP Dick Cheney and his aides.

"... According to 'The Sunday Telegraph's' correspondents in the US, US intelligence and defense officials believe that the White House has already adopted the toughest line, which is promoted by 'hawks.'"

- "The US - who will pay for the damage in Iraq?"

Leading "Clarn" carries an op-ed piece by international analyst Oscar Ral Cardoso, who writes (09/15) "Economist Paul Krugman clearly explained it in his recent column for 'The New York Times - Iraqi oil is the major piece proving the direct failure of the US political and military occupation...

"... Krugman believes that the fact that Texas-based Hunt Oil Company has signed an oil exploration agreement with the Kurd province of Iraq has exposed that the Bush administration has more or less begun to accept the idea that Iraq could disappear as a country and become a region where ethnic and religious groups confront each other. Krugman wrote: 'Without a consensus to share oil dividends there is no Iraq, but a collection of armed gangs fighting for the control of oil.'

"Why does the action of a sole oil company reveal so much to the columnist? This is because the head of the company, Ray L. Hunt, is Bush's partner as well as a member of a panel that counsels on foreign policy. In Krugman's view, Hunt should therefore have first-quality information on Bush's real intentions in Iraq. Otherwise, he would not risk signing a deal that explicitly goes against the republican administration's proclaimed policy - Bush had prioritized that Al Maliki pass legislation allowing all groups (Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds) to share the country's oil wealth, which did not go through (last week that legislation was not passed by Congress).

"Thus, the bottom line is delaying the collapse of Iraq until after Bush leaves office in one year so that his successor deals with the Persian Gulf's 'Titanic' when its deck is sunk. According to this reasoning, (Bush's) successor will also have to take responsibility for it as well as taste the bitterness of defeat."

- "Kirchner will bring his 'succession model' to the UN"

Jorge Rosales, political columnist of daily-or-record "La Nacisn," comments (09/16) "(Argentine) President Nstor Kirchner's trip to New York next week will be his farewell to high world politics. Instead, it could represent the launching of a leading role for his wife... in a scenario that has proved increasingly attractive for her, as shown by her recent European trip.

"A little more than one month before (Argentine) presidential elections, the attention is focused on Cristina Kirchner's words, gestures and attitudes. Only one piece of information is enough to verify this - the Council of the Americas, the symbol of US economic power with interests in Latin America, will grant the senator the treatment of a Chief of State during a luncheon at the glamorous Waldorf Astoria (Hotel). This is not just chance. The Susan Segal-led conglomerate of interests always bets without risk and

today opinion surveys point out that the official candidate will easily win (presidential) elections in the first round.

"The influential (US) Federal Reserve, led by Timothy F. Geithner, will invite the President's wife to a private luncheon... Bankers want to obtain first-hand information about the economic policy she will implement if she is elected president in October, what she will do with the country's still defaulting debt and whether the Argentine economy has a strong base in the framework of an uncertain international scenario...

"... On Tuesday, September 25, (Nstor) Kirchner will grant his last address as president to the plenary of the 62nd UN General Assembly. He is expected to evaluate his administration and make a critical statement about the situation of the world, with a strong emphasis on the Malvinas issue and the criminal attacks against the Israeli Embassy and AMIA.

"(Argentina's) complicated ties to Iran will also be highlighted in his address. In the same place in which US President George W. Bush will blame the Iranian regime of destabilizing the Middle East with its nuclear ambitions, one should not expect (from President Kirchner) more than a complaint due to the lack of Iranian cooperation to shed light on the attack..."

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